

[161] enumeration of the population. My process was to get together several
 [124] of the most intelligent and well-informed men in the district ; cause them
 [211] to compare notes and then to tie a series of knots in strings as they are
 accustomed to do ; different kinds of knots distinguishing the sexes. Each
 house was counted separately, so that I obtained an exact census of the
 whole country with the following results. This cord census is now in the
 museum of the Smithsonian Institution, with many other articles, illus-
 trating the life and customs of the people.

[162] The population of each district is as follows :

Tiribi.....	103
Uren.....	604
Bri-bri.....	172
Cabecar.....	128
The Valley.....	219

Total.....1226

This covers all of the water-sheds of the Tilorio and Tiliri rivers ex-
 cept two small bands ; the Changinas on the Changina branch of the
 Tilorio and a refugee remnant of the Cabecars on the extreme head of
 the Tiliri. Probably an additional hundred would cover all of these.

On the North or Estrella river, and on the Chiripo, there are a few
 more Cabecars who have little communication with the headquarters of
 the tribe, but who are in the habit of going out to Limon or Matina for
 what little trade they require. These are probably in all, not more than
 200 or 300 in number. Nearly all speak Spanish and they are gradually
 approximating to civilized or semi-civilized ways.

[461] The cause of the rapid decrease in the population is their extreme in-
 [146] dolence. With a country fitted to produce all the fruits of the tropics ;
 [262] where maize grows luxuriantly, and where cattle and pigs increase with-
 out care or labor ; they are content to make plantains their staple, and
 almost their only food. Chicha the form in which most of their maize
 [273] is used, is a beverage very slightly intoxicating, if drunk in large quanti-
 ties, but the amount of nutriment derived from it is unimportant. Meat,
 whether of domestic or wild animals, is a rarity and a luxury, and the
 banana or plantain make up all deficiencies. The natural consequence
 of a bulky and comparatively innutritious diet is a low physical state.
 [147] The system has little resisting power against disease, or healing power
 [164] over wounds. A slight attack of coast fever, which, with an ordinary
 strong man of our own race, would be comparatively harmless, is very
 apt to terminate fatally with these people. Indolent ulcers are so com-
 mon that perhaps a full fourth of not only adults, but even children
 have them, usually on the legs, originating in some slight scratch or
 bruise ; and very few of the elderly persons are without their sores.
 [165] These ulcers often last for years, and I have seen them as broad as the
 two hands opened side by side. Although the local diseases are few, the
 entire absence of medical treatment, the ignorance of the first principles

Cacao is in great demand. The delicious sub-acid pulp is first sucked from the beans, which are roasted and ground on the chicha board, or stone into a coarse paste. It is the greatest luxury they possess. And still, I have never seen a young cacao tree belonging to an Indian. They depend for their supply on the old trees, planted by past generations. I have known an Indian make a two days' journey to collect a little cacao, when less labor would plant him fifty trees near his house. 222 272

Fishing is rarely performed with hook and line. They have two methods. One is to shoot the fish from a canoe (all the canoes belong to foreigners), or from the shore, or a rock. They use very long arrows, described previously, and are quite expert. Another method is to select a channel of the river beside an island. A frame-work is built at each end, of sticks and cane, which extend completely across the stream. When everything is ready, the people stationed at the upper end rapidly cover the frame-work with the leaves of the cane, so as to stop the water running through. Those at the lower frame, also spread on cane leaves, but thinner, only so as to keep the fish from passing through. Both parties must work at the same time, and as rapidly as possible, because as soon as the fish find the level of the water lowering they attempt to escape, and I was told that it has sometimes happened that every fish has gotten away before the dams were finished. In the course of a few hours the water is so low that the fish congregate in the deeper pools and are shot with arrows, or even taken out by hand. 226

The only divisions of time known are the natural astronomical ones: the day, the lunar month, and the year. A glance at the vocabulary will show that special words are used for day in the abstract as distinguished from night, and for to-day, to-morrow, day after to-morrow, &c., and for yesterday, &c. The month is called by the same name as the moon, "si." The year is counted from dry season to dry season, and is recognized by the ripening of the flower-stalks of the wild cane, on which they depend for arrow-shafts. It is called *da-was'* from this connection. 805

The local diseases of the country are fevers, acquired by going to the coast; or by the hill people, by going down to the low lands. They sometimes seem to become epidemic, due to an unusually wet season, or to the continuance of the rains throughout what should be a dry season. The summer of 1874 was particularly fatal in this respect. Rheumatism is common, especially with the older men. It is brought on by much exposure to rain, and by wading rivers when heated, on journeys. But the commonest infirmities are indolent ulcers, usually on the legs. They originate from any little scratch or bruise, and are the result of the low vital state of the system, due to a bulky but innutritious diet. A wound which, in a person in good health, would heal in a week, may result with one of these people in a sore lasting years, and perhaps at times involving an area twice as large as the hand. 164

Of remedies, they may be safely said to have none. They are learning 757

peoples (see p. 16), and are, curiously enough, 177
practically the only group in modern Costa 48
Rica who have retained their indigenous dress,
even though many of their customs have un-
fortunately disappeared.

VILLAGES

water for washing purposes. The drinking 312
water is derived from springs which are
located in the northern section of the town.

Curré and Lagarto are river hamlets, lying 361
in the very narrow plain cut by the Diquis
River in its upper course. They are low, un-
healthy locations, the houses situated in dense
forest and thickets. As a consequence, they
are not open and fresh as Boruca, but closed-
in, and, for many months of the year,
mosquito ridden. These villages have even
less the aspect of a formal town than Boruca.
Narrow, almost imperceptible foot paths lead [363]
from one of the widely scattered and nearly
hidden houses to the other. There are no
churches or schools, and perhaps there is one
fence in both communities. Water is obtained
from shallow wells on the river bank, from [312]
small creeks, or from the river itself.

Palmar Norte is on a flat right on the river
bank. The forest comes to the outskirts of the
town; but unlike the other river villages, the
community itself is open and free of the bush.
Palmar Norte is obviously under *ladino* [177]
influence. Here, there is a definite attempt to
lay out a "town" in the Spanish-American
sense, with a *plaza* or square, a church, school,
several saloons and stores, the houses all with
fences, and broad, wide, grass-covered streets
connecting blocks or squares. It keeps its
indigenous characteristics in the still ample
space or gardens around the houses, and, of [312]
course, their construction which, for the most
part, is like that of Lagarto and Curré. Mala-
ria is prevalent among the *Boruca*, who are, [164]
otherwise, an exceptionally healthy people.

SUBSISTENCE ACTIVITIES

square *varas*.¹⁸ The farms are away from the 241
village, and are generally fenced in. The fence
is nearly always made with living posts, 417

[P. 35A)]

SA19 Talamanca SA19

Bribri
Cabécar

765 is often made and is drunk at the burial place
 [279] during the ceremony. Pittier¹¹⁸ records the
 [782] [Text continues TOP of P. 35(B)--Qualyst]
 [825]

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

614 The Clans. The Bribri and the Cabécares are
 [616] divided into matrilineal clans which developed
 from moieties. Although a number of clans
 have disappeared through war and sickness,
 those which remain strictly follow the ancient
 582 rules. This emphasizes the non-marriageable
 614 position of all the mother's relatives. A vestige
 of cross-cousin marriage exists but is not
 compulsory. One can marry the mother's
 brother's child but never the offspring of the
 maternal aunt. On the father's side, beyond
 the father's sister and the first cousins, one can
 marry whom one wants. The importance of
 614 clan relationship is easily understood when
 673 one takes into consideration the moral code of
 these peoples. According to this there are three
 great sins which are placed in the following
 order:

- [825] 1) To have sexual relations with own clan.
 [324] 2) To allow an animal to suffer when wounded in-
 [177] stead of killing it rapidly.
 3) To kill a man. (This may be the influence of the
 Roman Catholic Church and the government of
 Costa Rica.)

582 The need to adhere to clan regulations in
 614 regard to marriage is illustrated by the forma-
 tion of new clans as a result of marriage out-
 side of the tribe proper. This has become more
 important because in the past 50 years many
 • [164] clans have died out due to measles and yellow
 fever epidemics, and the always present
 amoeba. In Salitre, for example, a new group
 has been formed which is known as *terú*. This
 started when a Bribri man belonging to the
unirwak clan married a Térraba woman. The
 Cabécares are less inclined to form new divi-
 sions. Those who have inter-married with the
 [166] Bribri do not remain in Cabécar territory (see
 list of Bribri clans).

614 On the Caribbean side, clans are associated
 [423] with given geographical sections (see Villages;
 [754] Land Tenure). The land is owned by the
 complete group and the medicine man in

¹¹⁸ Pittier, 1938, p. 26.¹¹⁹ Gabb, 1873, pp. 507-509.

[P.35(8)]

SA19 Talamanca SA19

Bribri

Cabécar

765

782

825

sacrificing of a military macaw (*Ara militaris*)
over the grave.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

614

[423]

756

[422]

[627]

[692]

[681]

[184]

[423]

certain clans still controls and keeps ritual property. This consists of drums or gold pre-Columbian figures (see Myths: *Clan Protectors*). Formerly the *usegLa* administered justice within the clan. Now the medicine man sometimes assumes this role although the most usual method is for the family of the culprit to take matters into their own hands. In extreme cases such as a sexual offense within the clan or murder, poison is given or the offender is buried alive. On the Pacific slope, land tenure by individual clans disappears. Three or two groups, as the case may be, settle in a given section such as Cabagra or China Kichá, and own land as a single unit.

[484]

[184]

[422]

[692]

These people know, however, of their Talamancan counterparts and keep as a goal the idea of visiting, at least to know personally, the home site of their clan on the Caribbean watershed. Clan-owned ritual property does not appear on the Pacific. The family unit on this side has been known to administer justice, but this task is usually left to the Costa Rican civil authorities in the nearest center.

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[114]

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[793]

[693]

Gabb does not seem to have considered the clans, rather he makes a distinction in social classes,¹¹⁶ indicating the Cabécar *usegLa*, or high priest, as the spiritual head of both Bribri and Cabécar, while the temporal ruler was Bribri. This lay head was known as the "King" and tradition holds that there were two clans of "Kings." These were not inter-marriageable. Only one clan of these remains today (see Non-Documental History of Talamanca). The Indians recount that the most powerful individual was the *usegLa* who spoke both Bribri and Cabécar. It is said that complaints were passed from the "King" to him for decisive action. On such occasions, he retired to a secret and sacred cave which had much *pita* (see Fibers) at the entrance. There he had sacred jaguars known as "dogs" and snakes at his command. The last *usegLa* is supposed to have died from smallpox during the first half of the 20th century. The clan of the *usegLa* still exists, however, in the upper Coen, Tala-

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• [114]

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Bribri
Cabécar

758

house. The *pejibaye* has the advantage of thorns to keep innocent children from straying into trouble, as no one except the medicine man is allowed to touch the ill. Water is kept within reach of the sick person by suspending it in a gourd from a long stick.

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Lehmann¹⁴⁷ pointed out that the liver was considered the key to all emotions, sickness, and health. This is still true. The Cabécar phrase for happy or the state of good health signifies that the liver is in good condition. Lehmann further adds that the activities of the soul are connected with this organ.¹⁴⁸ On the whole, many fevers are supposed to be caused by the liver. Among the Bribri, however, influenza is credited to *bák-namí* (see Myths).

[77]

• 164

The principal complaints noted among these peoples are caused by intestinal parasites with subsequent anemia; conjunctivitis, especially among the Bribri; *papalomollo* or Leishmaniosis; and malaria, particularly in Talamanca. Measles, mumps, and at times smallpox and yellow fever also take a heavy toll when they occur in epidemic form.

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Among the Cabécares, there are numerous cases of male perversion. No social stigma is attached nor is any cure attempted.

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Curing. Herbs, vines, quinine bark, and other medicines prepared from flowers and berries are used.

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A medicine for snake bites is made from *Dracontium Pittieri* Engl. and also from *Aristolochia syriacola* Standley, which is mashed and cooked. This is combined with the bark of a tree called *bek* in Cabécar and

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is used to cause sterilization. Diets, as has been noted, form a part of many cures although they are also observed at times of death by the *usegLa* clan. The principal ceremonial and

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magical elements included in curing are songs (prayers), always sung with the staff and the stones. One of the prayers the medicine men of Cabécar and some of the Bribri sing to combat sickness and to foretell if the patient will live or die is given under the heading of *Sacred Songs*. To rid one of the *wimblu*, the medicine man sings for three nights and asks *sibu* (see Theological Beliefs) not to allow the spirit to scare any more.

[77]

¹⁴⁷ Lehmann, 1920, vol. 1, p. 282.¹⁴⁸ Lehmann, 1920, vol. 1, p. 282.